



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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civil and military services by the rules of trades unions and by patronage; and when at length the abuse was too awful to be borne with longer, they declared that there ought to be tests of fitness applied. So the wise men of the country have applied the best tests they could think of. It is surely our duty to educate the wise men so that these tests of fitness shall be real, shall induce real education of every kind in candidates. The word 'examination' has become a technical term for a written examination by an outside examiner, who fixes the curriculum irrespective of the inclinations of pupils and teacher, who sets questions without the assistance of the teacher, who makes a report of fitness of pupils and teacher without inspecting the school, without seeing the pupils at work, without even having any personal acquaintance with the teacher. I do not think that this is what the English people asked for or want (except high school mistresses who would wail if we took away from them their golden calf, their external standard). Several speakers ask for a reform of examinations, but I assert that we want reform of a whole system of dunce manufacture of which examination is only one part.

"Is the reform to come from above or below? In Germany, reforms* always come from above. In England, they come from below, and from above, and from the middle. We must educate everybody. The whole system of teaching and the testing of teaching is absurd, and we must educate parents and teachers and examiners and the wise men who appoint examiners. . . . Principal Rücker suggests in the words 'my people will have it so,' that, however bad an examination system may be in the eyes of all the wise men of the country, in the eyes of every writer of every newspaper in the country—for the scorn of the system fills the land—that the English people will cling to it, that 'my people will believe a lie.'"

No! the English people will not, indefinitely at all events, "believe a lie." It is this faith which underlies the very constitution of the Parents' National Educational Union. It is this faith which make it worth while to reiterate certain educational axioms, to continue hammering away and "writing to the *Times*," until these axioms—to quote Mr. Jackson's phrase—have been "condemned as truisms."

* "Yes, and the reverse of reform! The 'State' in Germany can do what it pleases. The 'Prussian Regulations' of 1854 almost destroyed elementary education; the 'General Provisions' of 1872 rehabilitated it."

THE GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

BY T. G. ROOPER, ESQ., H.M.I.

Great Men do mean what they say.

TIME. It is night. The sunshine seldom gladdened his days, whose life was spent in the gloom of a scantily furnished study, where, besides a chair and a desk, there was nothing else but a shelf laden with dusty parchments, hard to decipher and harder still to understand. It is fitting that his funeral procession be ordered by night on whom in his lifetime the sun so rarely shone.

Then for the *place* of interment; that must be on the hill-top. His whole life was a long ascent, in the course of which there was no level ground. In like manner the bearers must painfully wind in long procession up the steep hill to the very top. As he passed through life so must his last journey be.

But the work of his life, the revival of learning, was the sunrise of a new day for mankind. Therefore it is fitting that he be committed to the grave at dawn, at the moment when a new day promises new life to all the world. The crest of the hill will be illuminated before the plain below.

"Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rockrow."

In the loftier realms of thought man's spirit "burns rarer, intenser." But the scholar studied for the good of man and not for his own pleasure. He was no hermit, forsaking men to better himself; he renounced social intercourse that he might make himself more serviceable to his kind. Therefore let the scholar be buried, not like heroes of old on some lonely summit, seldom trodden by the foot of man, but rather in some high-built market place, daily crossed and recrossed by the busy steps of the multitude whom his life will ennoble, because he lived to magnify the mind. In the north of Europe cities lie in plains or valleys, but in the south they were often built on high ground. Rome was the city of the seven hills; Athens and Corinth each crowned the summit of a rock.

And now the bearers address their shoulders to the burthen. Let them tread firmly and step warily. The ascent is long, the path is steep, and the load is heavy. Let there be no stumbling; let them prove to all the world that they

bear the coffin of no common man. The warnings to the bearers which are interjected from time to time play an important part in the structure of the poem, and harmonize with the various stages of the scholar's career. The funeral begins the toilsome ascent, and the verses which describe it are somewhat rugged, but as soon as the bearers obtain from the rising ground a dim view of the plain beneath, where all lies in quiet repose, there occurs a line of marvellous sweetness—

"Sleep croft and herd, sleep darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather"—

like a momentary gleam of brightness in a sombre scene.

What manner of man was this master, "famous, calm and dead"? He was no meagre specimen of humanity. In him none of the graces of a man were wanting. He had been handsome in his youth, and he had been possessed of arts which charm. But he forsook music and the dance and ail that belongs to youth, in order to devote himself entirely to learning. Long he studied in obscurity till he awoke to the discovery that youth had departed. Was it not now time to enjoy a little of life before it was too late? His friends would urge him to shut his books and leave learning to younger men. It should be noticed at this point that the poet interjects a warning to the bearers, who are supposed to feel the labour of the ascent:—

"Keep the mountain side, make for the city."

Let the bearers imitate the scholar who held on to his self-appointed task uninterruptedly—"Left play for work, grappled with the world, bent on escaping the common life."

So he went on deciphering old Greek texts, Homer and Æschylus and Plato and the rest, and grew learned beyond other men. But where now were the sunny locks of his youth and the brightness of his glance and the sweetness of his voice? All these were gone, and instead he was bald and stammering and leaden-eyed. Again the world tempted him. There is yet time to taste life. All that has preceded is but the overture, the prelude, the piece before the play. It is time to raise the curtain for the drama itself to begin. But again the scholar is resolute. What if he had mastered the ancient writers, he had yet to examine all that had been written in the way of explanation. And then it was time to commence original work for himself. He had laid out his

plan for his whole lifetime. He had mastered the learning of the past to spurn it when acquired and commence anew. This was his design.

"Fancy the fabric
Quite ere you build,
Ere mortar dab brick."

The crown of the design was to add to knowledge after working up to its limits. The scholar's ideal was at length within his grasp. A warning to the bearers reminds them that their goal is in sight. "Here is the town gate reached, there is the market place," with the open grave in the centre. Let the tired bearers take heart and inspirit the last few moments of their toil with their chanting. The scholar studied in no mercenary spirit. By a life of study he would add to the stock of human knowledge. It would be for others to put it to use. That was "God's affair, not his."

Now for the last time the world tempts him again. Life is ebbing fast. His friends say, "Master, rest awhile, and before you pass away enjoy the consolation of some last conversation with those you are leaving." But the aged Grammarian replied—

"What's now? Leave 'now' for dogs and apes;
Man has for ever."

In spite of all the diseases of old age, the temptation to rest is yet once more resisted. The bearers are warned that only a few steps more remain of the narrow winding way. The scholar scorns rest on his death-bed, and plunges once more into his parchments, whilst the poet pauses to take stock of his life and draw the moral of it.

If we work and seek quick return for our toil, the bargain is a cheap and common one. He who sets himself an easy task soon completes it and receives the payment for it. A great work will require a life-time, and its payment will never be received this side the grave.

He ventured, neck or nothing: "heaven found or earth's failure." "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered, "Yes." A large pile of little things do not make a great one.

"That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit;
That high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit."

So the scholar continues his labour in his last agony.

"He settled hoti's business—let it be
Properly based oun;
Gave us the doctrine of the enolytic de
Dead from the waist down."

These curious lines, which seem to halt and gasp like the breath of a dying man, gather up briefly the sum of the scholar's work. He pursued knowledge into accurate corners. The three Greek particles, hoti, oun and de, have different meanings according to their accents, and these different meanings are easily overlooked. Yet the sense of important passages may be interpreted quite wrongly for want of discrimination between these nice and subtle points. How small is the addition to the sum of learning that even a life's work can accomplish, and yet no less a sacrifice than a life is required for that little! "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answers, "Yes."

So the Grammarian left his work to lighten the world after his death. The darkness of mediæval thought slowly vanishes before the morning beams of newer learning.

The grave is reached. The bearers set down their burden and look around. They see many a quiet home lying peacefully on the plain. There live the many at peace. Here on the hill-top is the home of the "High flyers." Yonder is the curlew, who loves hills and moors, but shuns the common herd. Here flies the swallow, the type of emigration, the symbol of the scholar's flight from death in life to life in death.

Here let him lie in his "appropriate place," where the elemental forces of nature are most vividly perceived. Here are best seen the meteors blazing across the sky. Here thunder-clouds gather and lightnings play round the hill-top. Here are best watched the constellations as they rise in the east and traverse the heavens with their western setting. Here the last surroundings of the scholar will be the majesty and the sweetness of Nature. Let joy accompany the storm and peace descend with the evening dew. In the midst of such associations let us take a last farewell of the Grammarian.

"Lofty designs must close in like effects,
Loftily lying.
Leave him still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying."

THE TRAINING OF THE ARTISTIC PERCEPTION IN YOUNG CHILDREN.

THERE is an old idea which still gains credence in many quarters that because a child cannot distinguish between good and bad in matters of art, the pictures and general decorations of his surroundings during the early years of life are of little importance. Indeed, in some houses the nursery is considered as a fitting refuge for many things which, by reason of their age, or it may be owing to a change of fashion, are no longer thought good enough for the drawing-room or the dining-room. "The children do not know the difference," it is said, "and will like these things just as much as better ones," and so there is an end of the matter. But does the matter end there? I venture to think that the trouble only begins.

Then there are other people who think that children should be brought up in the utmost plainness, and who consequently try to banish art altogether from their surroundings, as being a luxury with which they should have no concern, the only exception allowed being perhaps a few coloured pictures from the Christmas numbers hung on the nursery walls. But their efforts are in vain. They can no more banish art from the daily life of the child, or indeed of the nation, than they can themselves continue to exist without food. It is only the kind of art which can be controlled, and there indeed it is in their power to decide whether it shall be the false art or the true; if it shall elevate and stimulate the imagination, or be poverty-stricken in thought and ideal—one which shall enrich and sweeten all life which comes into contact with it, or which shall deaden and depress.

Art is so often thought of as belonging to the leisure part of life, and having no connection with the work-a-day world, that it may be well to show how this supposition is erroneous.

We hear a great deal nowadays about many useful arts, such as the art of teaching, or the art of cooking, and the word "art," when so used, always signifies the doing of these various processes, and implies the doing of them well, that is